A/AC.172/1993/CRP.14/Add.12
19 May 1993

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

COMMITTEE ON CONFERENCES
Substantive session
Agenda item 12*

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

Draft report

Rapporteur: Mr. Imre KARBUCZKY (Hungary)

Addendum

IX. REVIEW OF THE OFFICE OF CONFERENCE SERVICES

Introduction and overview

1. Pursuant to paragraph 2 (c) of resolution 47/202 C, the Secretary-General was to submit, if necessary, recommendations on possible restructuring of the Office of Conference Services (OCS) to the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session through the Committee on Conferences and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions. Inasmuch as the Secretary-General's proposals on the restructuring of OCS were to be contained in the revised estimates for 1992-1993, at its organizational meeting, held on 2 March 1993, the Committee on Conferences decided to consider the matter in March prior to consideration thereof in the Fifth Committee.

2. At its 344th meeting, held on 26 March 1993, the Committee considered the item on review of OCS in accordance with the aforementioned decision on the basis of the report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/C.5/47/88.

Discussion

3. In introducing the item, the representative of the Secretariat discussed the new organizational structure of OCS. Clarification was sought and received regarding the redistribution of publishing functions among three organizational

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* A/AC.172/150/Add.1.

units, namely OCS, the Office of General Services (OGS) and the Department of Public Information (DPI). OCS would continue to provide Secretariat services to the Committee on Conferences and remain responsible for preparing and submitting reports to that body. The restructuring would in no way modify the respective mandates of the Committee on Conferences or the Committee on Information.

4. As to queries raised about possible delays, inefficiency or increased costs, the Secretariat assured the Committee that the restructuring would not affect the preparation of parliamentary documentation. Indeed, the same procedure would be followed for the processing of such documentation. Moreover, in meeting its new responsibilities, DPI had at its disposal the resources formerly available to OCS in planning and administering the publications programme.

5. With regard to the informal study carried out by external consultants, the Secretariat stated that the consultants' suggestions concerning the possible use of machine-assisted translation of documents were being followed up by the services concerned.

6. Concern was expressed that the report of the Secretary-General lacked overview in terms of the direction, duration and finality of the restructuring.

Conclusions and recommendations

7. The Committee noted that the purpose of the restructuring was to enhance the efficiency and smooth functioning of the Secretariat and was of the view that the process should be undertaken in a comprehensive and integrated manner and within a specified period of time.

8. The Committee also noted that the proposed restructuring within the Department of Administration and Management would result in a gap between the head of the Department at the level of under-secretary-general and heads of offices at the D-2 level.

9. The Committee expressed concern that the redistribution of publishing functions might result in increased costs or delays or inefficiencies in the processing of parliamentary documentation, noting that there was a close link between documents processing and the effective management of meetings. The Committee also drew attention to its mandate to monitor the policy of the Organization on publications, and requested the Secretariat to ensure that appropriate services were provided to the Committee on Conferences through close coordination between OCS and DPI.

10. Members agreed that the Chairman would address a letter to the Chairman of the Fifth Committee expressing the aforementioned views of the Committee on Conferences.